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CIA Wants Secret Hearing to Protest Privacy-Safeguard Bill

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WASHINGTON — The Central Intelligence Agency, in a highly unusual move, has quietly asked the Senate Judiciary Committee to hear its private objections to a bill already reported to the Senate for action.

The bill is a measure designed to safeguard the privacy of government employes from unwarranted intrusions. Among other things, it would limit the use of lie detector and psychiatric tests by all federal agencies, including the CIA.

CIA officials, whose identity could not be learned,

contacted Sen. James O. Eastland (D., Miss.) the judiciary committee chairman, and Sen. Birch Bayh (D., Ind.), to request a secret hearing on the agency's objections.

Eastland promptly passed along the CIA's request to the other committee members. He also distributed a letter from Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D., N.C.), opposing an executive session to hear CIA's case.

Ervin is the principal sponsor of the privacy bill, which was originally scheduled for senate debate on Friday but was withdrawn from the calendar at the last minute.

Ervin's letter to Eastland warned that recommitment of the bill would "set an unusual precedent." But the North Carolinian said he would be willing to have the CIA testify in a public session.

"I would like to expose before the American people the specious arguments which the Central Intelligence Agency puts forth as reasons for wishing an exemption . . . from the bill."

In an interview, Ervin elaborated his position, arguing that the CIA has come to regard itself as immune from the personal freedoms guaranteed by the Constitu-

tion.

"They apparently don't want any law applied to them," he said. "They seem to think they ought not to be accountable for anything."

As for the hearings requested by the CIA, Ervin declared, "I'm opposed to secret meetings. It's ridiculous to ask for secret hearings on legislation affecting the rights of Americans."

Twice during committee consideration of the bill, he went on, the CIA was invited to testify. On both occasions, according to Ervin, the invitation was declined.

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